

Clematis

A Garden Guide

CLEMATIS has been called the queen of vines, and they want fertile well-draining soil, cool roots, and consistent moisture. Clematis come in various colors, bloom times, flower forms, and lengths. They are gorgeous covering an arbor, trellis, fence, mailbox, or lamppost. They prefer full sun (6-8 hours) to part sun (4-6 hours) of sunlight.



PLANTING: They like ample soil preparation. Dig a hole at least 18" wide as well as deep, working mushroom compost or well-rotted manure into the bottom of the hole as well as in with the backfill soil. Add a handful or two of rock phosphate or bone meal to the backfill. **Clematis is one of the few plants that like to be planted deeply** – bury the root ball 2-3" below soil level.

KEEP ROOTS SHADED: Clematis likes to have their tops in open sun but their roots in the shade. Mulch is important to keep roots cool, place about 2" deep and keep at least 3" away from the stem of the plant.

FERTILE SOIL: Organic fertilizers that feed the life in the soil, that then nourishes the plant, is an excellent approach for long term plant health and resilience. Some options include: composted Cow manure, Fish emulsions, Kelp meal, Espoma Flower-Tone®, Worm castings, Green sand, and more. Apply according to product instructions.

MOISTURE: 1" of water per week. It is better to water deeply once a week than to water lightly, daily.

PRUNING: Prune right after blooming. Pruning encourages strong growth and flowering, and keeps growth in check. Prune to just above a bud. Unpruned plants will become long and scraggly, with blooms only at the tips of the vines.

CLEMATIS WILT: Clematis can be prone to a fungal disease called clematis wilt (*Ascochyta clematidina*). Physical damage to roots or stems creates routes to infection; the fungal spores are spread by splashing water, mulch too close to the stem, or unsanitary pruning. The plants will appear to turn brown, wither, and apparently die. Remove all infected plant parts, along with any mulch that diseased leaves have touched. Apply a copper fungicide drench to the soil around the plant. Plants usually recover and grow new vines next season.

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